The Observer
# food monthly
February 2023 № 261

The OFM 30

Everything We Love in the World of Food Right Now

Starring Clement Ogbonnaya
The Pub Prince of Peckham

Chefs Behind Bars

Mother Tongue
Our New Favourite Cookbook

The Ultimate Potato

Butties are Back

Sheffield
The UK's Hotspot

Star Baker
Helen Evans

Manchester's Cocktail Kings

VISIT…

LANZAROTE Caliente.com

Lily O'Brien's

who wants a truffle?

The perfect chocolates to share with your best O' friends.

Lily O'Brien's
Salted Caramel Truffles
Oooh! So Delicious
200g ℮ 7.05oz
VOTED PRODUCT OF THE YEAR®
Consumer Survey of Product Innovation
2023
Lily O'Brien's
Milk Chocolate Truffles
Oooh! So Delicious
200g ℮ 7.05oz

Winner Chocolate Category. Survey of 8,000 people by Kantar.

Also available in Milk Chocolate!

Grab a box and get together. Available in the confectionery aisle.

Lily O'Brien's

For the ones you really know.

Contents

February

The OFM 30

A grand tour of all that's best in the world of OFM. We head to the restaurants of Leeds and Sheffield, pubs in Peckham, bars in Manchester and a perfect little corner of Scotland. We meet a star baker, the author of a brilliant new cookbook and the photographer telling the story of a single perfect dish. On the menu along the way: butties, rum cake and the most delicious potato dish of all **page 10**

Regulars & recipes

Jay Rayner
Mapping a lifetime of cooking in the nicks and scars born of appetite and occasional clumsiness in the kitchen **page 5**

My secret ingredient
Roast a fish, then baste it in butter and baharat, says chef Selin Kiazim **page 5**

Nigel Slater
Bowl food with depth of flavour: cheese soup with bacon and beans, chicken with butternut squash and miso. To finish? Rhubarb and ginger trifle **page 6**

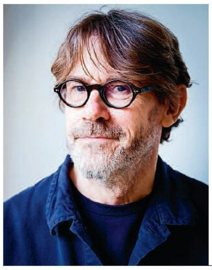
Korean recipes
Su Scott won an OFM Award for best reader's recipe. Now she's written her first cookbook, filled with food from her childood, including sugar-cured mackerel with anise-pickled rhubarb, and black bean sauce noodles **page 22**

Rachel Cooke
Why Henry Harris's saffron mousse and my brother's fresh baked bread are kindness in food form **page 26**

Illustration
Ahoy There/CIA

Photograph
Sophia Spring

PHIL FISK, TOBY SCOTT, JONATHAN LOVEKIN



Nigel Slater

Our guide for food lovers, why dinner is better in a bowl, plus Korean recipes to lift the spirits

In this month's issue of Food Monthly we celebrate 30 of the most exciting things happening in food right now, from scholarships in baking for refugees and fine-dining supper clubs championing West Indian food to an extraordinary marriage of Malay and Scottish cooking in Glasgow. We take a peek at the growing interest in blurring the lines between white, red and rosé wines, and hear about an initiative for prison cooking that is improving the way inmates eat. We salute a fine shortbread handmade in small batches, praise the potato pavé and get to know the UK's first ever food museum.

There are two collections of recipes this month, including Su Scott's Korean grilled and sugar-cured mackerel, and black bean sauce noodles with pork. You may remember Scott winning the OFM Award's reader recipe a little while ago, which helped lead to a book deal, and her first one, *Rice Table: Korean Recipes and Stories to Feed the Soul*, is published this month. I bring a batch of ideas for suppers best suited to being eaten from a bowl rather than on a plate. Dishes whose comfort and warmth you can feel in your hands, from cheese soup with beans and bacon to chicken stew with pumpkin and miso. And, of course, I manage to squeeze in another trifle recipe.

Jay Rayner ponders the marks and scars of the keen cook: the inevitable physical signs of a life spent with hot griddles and sharp knives. As chef Jeremy Lee puts it: "The marks really come out in the sun … my forearms make me look like a zebra." And it is not only cooks who can bear their scars. Writers have them, too. The accidental tattoo I gave myself with a fountain pen at school took a good 40 years to disappear. **OFM**

15

22

6

10

PAID CONTENT

Is it time to reframe what true romance really is?

In her final column, bestselling author Otegha Uwagba reflects on how romance isn't dead, it just needs to be packaged differently

PHOTOGRAPHY: OLLIE TRENCHARD; ILLUSTRATION: OLIVIA WALLER

The most romantic meal I've ever had was eaten entirely on my own.

Years ago, on a solo trip to Barcelona, ostensibly to finish working on a book proposal, I found myself dining alone, sitting outside at a little neighbourhood restaurant as the heat of the day faded into a quiet evening.

I can still remember exactly what I ate – *sopa de pimientos rojos* (that's a red pepper soup to you and me) with a prosciutto-topped tostada, followed by *arroz con gambas* and a plate of the most deliciously sticky pork ribs. "Dessert?" my waiter asked with a polite smile as he cleared away the last of my main course, though of course we both already knew what my answer would be – in for a peso, in for a pound.

As I worked my way through each dish, like a truffle pig on a Tuscan hillside, digging and scraping, scooping a stray drop of sauce off a thumb and back into my mouth, I was struck by how romantic the setting was – and it suddenly dawned on me that our definition of romance could be expanded.

'To me, romance doesn't have to be about heart-shaped balloons and overpriced bouquets of red roses'

To me, romance doesn't have to just be about heart-shaped balloons and giant bouquets of red roses – even if we all love those things on the day. Rather, it's about applying your fanciest perfume even though you're not planning on leaving the house, or taking the time to iron your pyjamas before you put them on (I promise you, the way you'll sleep hits different). It's drinking the "good wine" with your midweek dinner just because. Personally, I love nothing more than opening a bottle of McGuigan Black Label Red when I've got a night to myself; its versatility and smooth fruit flavours make it the ideal partner for a Netflix and takeaway session (especially if that takeaway is pizza or spicy Asian). It's about treating yourself as you would a lover: with care and indulgence, by going the extra mile.

So, if your bank balance – or your heart – is feeling a little worse for wear in the aftermath of yet another pressurised Valentine's Day, it might be worth reframing your concept of what romance really is.

Raising a glass

McGuigan Wines are available in most UK supermarkets. For more information, please go to **mcguiganwines.co.uk**

PAID FOR BY

McGUIGAN WINES

be**drinkaware**.co.uk

See **theguardian.com/paid-for-content** for GNM's commercial content guidelines

The Guardian Labs

The Happy Eater

Jay Rayner

Making dinner means dicing with danger, but it's a risk I'm willing to take

There were a few seconds, immediately after the blade sliced deep into the tip of my left index finger and shortly before the blood began to gush, when I merely watched. There always seems to be a moment like this following an injury in the kitchen; a stillness, before the crisis management kicks in, when we are lost in bafflement at our clumsiness or stupidity or just plain bad luck.

In this case, it was a mixture of all three. My knife skills do not deserve the name. I am a home cook, not a trained chef, and I haven't quite mastered the business of folding my finger tips under while resting my knuckles against the blade. I was shredding spring onions. I was distracted. Now I was injured.

The wound took a month to heal. Now I have a crescent-shaped scar at the tip. It gets to join all the other scars. There is the long, slug-shaped pale mark on my right wrist where it fried against the top edge of a very hot oven as I reached in with a spatula.

We assume these things fade with time, but I'm now made of older skin and bone; that one will be with me for life. There are the polka dots of multiple small burns on the ball of my left hand, caused by reaching in to get the oven tray. Now there is this new one.

Anyone who cooks regularly has these marks. I am not proud of them. I would be very happy if none of these minor accidents had occurred; if I were unscarred. No one should make light of potential disfigurement.

Happily, though, they are minor enough that I can now be curiously fond of them. They are my life in the kitchen, written on the body, the physical marks of someone who has diced vegetables and chopped onions, fretted over stock pots and poked at roasts, tasted sauces, deep fried and charred and blitzed.

The fact is that cookery is not risk free. It involves fire and knives. While the possibility of injury may decrease with experience, the likelihood of it happening increases because of repetition.

I am fond of these scars – they are my life in the kitchen, written on the body

Illustration *Sarah Tanat-Jones*

Behold the professionals. My friend Jeremy Lee, revered chef at Quo Vadis, has been cooking all day, almost every working day, for more than 30 years. "The marks really come out in the sun," he says. "My forearms make me look like a zebra. And you look at them and go, ah, there you are."

The great Manchester chef Mary-Ellen McTague says her attitude to minor injuries has changed over the years. "Once, they were a badge of honour," she says. "If your finger was hanging off and you were still cooking, it was weirdly heroic. Now, I'd rather just be safe. But I do feel an affection for my scars."

Clearly accidents happen. Such is life. There is, however, one risk in the kitchen that every cook I've ever discussed it with winces at the thought of: the mandolin. "Watching someone slicing on a mandolin makes me very nervous," McTague says. "I don't know a cook who hasn't lost a fingertip to one of those."

Lee understands why it happens. "Maybe you can't find the guard," he says. "So you go for it. And then we kick ourselves for just being silly sods and too gung ho."

That's how it works. We plan to make something nice to eat. Then the hand slips. The blade does its worst. And we know, for certain, that the mark of our highly developed appetites will be with us for a long time to come. OFM

jay.rayner@observer.co.uk

INTERVIEW BY MOLLY TAIT-HYLAND. GETTY IMAGES

My secret ingredient

Selin Kiazim's baharat

Baharat is the word for spice in general in Turkish but it's also used for a mix. One of the predominant flavours is allspice berries – it's got lots of warm spices, such as cloves and nutmeg, and sometimes a bit of cinnamon. Everyone has a special mix. I add mahleb and mastic – this is my grandmother's recipe. Mahleb are dried cherry seeds, with quite a bitter flavour. Mastic is a resin from a tree, almost pine-like in taste. You probably won't get these spices in supermarkets but you can buy them in Turkish or Middle Eastern stores.

I use baharat the most in bread inspired by my grandmother. She used to make a white loaf encrusted with sesame seeds and ripple the baharat mix through. I now use it in sourdough.

Baharat works in lots of sweet and savoury dishes, such as fish. Roast a piece, chuck in a knob of butter and baharat at the end, and baste it.

Warm spices make us think of Christmas and mulled wine, but baharat isn't just for winter. OFM

Selin Kiazim is a chef and food writer

Magic circles

Brilliant bowl food: chicken stew with squash and miso, cheese soup with beans and bacon, ginger and rhubarb trifle. By ***Nigel Slater***

There is much joy to be had in holding a bowl of food in your hands, your fingers gradually warmed by the dish and its fragrant contents. Dinner in a bowl, be it thick soup or stew, spiced rice or creamy pasta, feels instantly informal and relaxed – always a good start. There is an intimacy, too: you feel closer to your supper than when eating from a plate with a knife and fork.

A bowl is particularly good for cold-weather food. This is the occasion for recipes where lamb or chicken is simmered until it can be effortlessly pulled from its bones with a spoon, and where there is as much broth to your dinner as meat and vegetables. I often stand, glazed stoneware in hand, eating with just a fork or soup spoon. A dish of rice for one, maybe – sticky rice seasoned with pickles and fresh herbs – or a thick soup of plump beans and bacon.

The fragrance of a dish – the warm, earthy scent of a stew, perhaps – is better captured in a bowl than on a flat plate. The steam is trapped by the high sides, increasing tenfold the pleasure of every mouthful. Dishes with deep sides also allow you to get out that most hospitable and generous of kitchen implements – the ladle. And there is a practical side to all of this, too; anything served in a bowl will keep hot to the last mouthful– no bad thing on a stone-cold winter's night.

Photographs
Jonathan Lovekin

Above, aromatic sticky rice, see page 8. Right, chicken stew with butternut squash and miso

Chicken stew with butternut squash and miso

You need a receptacle for this slow-cooked chicken and its deep brown, earthy broth. There is no thickening other than from the vegetables, so serve with a spoon to catch the miso-seasoned liquor. I use the dark, more piquant brown-red miso paste, but use the lighter, less beefy one if that is what you have to hand. I don't feel any accompaniment is necessary here, but I probably wouldn't refuse a spoonful of mashed potato if you were to offer it. Allow two large free-range thighs per person.

Serves 3
chicken thighs, bone in 1kg (about 6)
olive oil 3 tbsp
onion 1, medium
carrots 350g
swede 250g
celery 2 sticks
garlic 4 cloves
thyme 8 sprigs
bay leaves 3

chicken or vegetable stock 750ml
butternut squash or pumpkin 500g
red miso paste 2 tbsp

● *Directions*

Season the chicken, warm the oil in a large, deep pan, then brown the chicken lightly on both sides. While the chicken browns, peel and chop the onion, carrot and swede, keeping the pieces quite chunky, then roughly chop the celery. Remove the chicken from the pan and set aside.

Return the pan to the heat and add the onion, carrot, swede and celery. Peel the garlic and add whole to the onions with the thyme and bay leaves. Continue cooking until the onions are soft and glossy (they should be sticky with the caramelised sugars left behind by the chicken), then return the chicken and any juices to the pan, pour in the stock and bring to the boil.

Immediately lower the heat to a simmer and let the chicken cook, partially covered by a lid, for 30 minutes. Peel, seed and thickly slice the squash or pumpkin, then add to the pan and continue cooking for a further 20 minutes till all of the vegetables are tender.

Stir in the miso paste, continue cooking for five minutes, then divide between bowls, ladling the broth over the chicken.

»

Left, cheese soup with beans and bacon. Right, rhubarb and ginger trifle

Aromatic sticky rice

My go-to bowl of comfort. The rice is of the sticky sort, which is immediately satisfying. It is seasoned with a mixture of aromatics, ginger, garlic and chillies, all of which are fried until lightly crisp, then it is lent a little crunchiness with sesame and nigella seeds, pickled green peppercorns and, lastly, spiked with fresh lime. It is a bowl that both soothes and uplifts, especially if I introduce some pickled radish or sprouted seeds, chopped fresh mint leaves or basil. Beyond the cooking of the rice, there are no rules really, the dish is quite personal in that you can season it how you, and you alone, like it.

Enough for 2
sushi rice 250g
ginger 35g
fresh red chilli 1 large
garlic 2 cloves
groundnut oil 2 tbsp
sesame seeds 2 tsp
nigella seeds 1 tbsp
green peppercorns in brine 1 tsp
lime 1

● *Directions*
Put the rice in a small saucepan, cover with enough water to come 2cm above the rice. Add a teaspoon of sea salt flakes and cover tightly with a lid. Bring to the boil then lower the heat to a simmer and leave for 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside, lid in place.

Peel the ginger and cut into thin slices. Stack the slices, then cut into thin matchsticks. Halve, seed and finely shred the chilli. Peel and very thinly slice the garlic.

Warm the oil in a shallow pan, add the ginger, chilli and garlic, and let them cook for a couple of minutes over a high heat, keeping them almost constantly moving, so they colour but do not brown. Add the sesame and nigella, let the sesame seeds darken a little and become fragrant, then add the green peppercorns.

Divide the rice between two bowls, put the aromatics on top then squeeze over a little lime juice.

I often also add a small amount of Japanese pickles, sprouted seeds (such as radish or mung beans), lumps of smoked cod's roe, fried cashews or almonds or chopped coriander and mint. You can also moisten the rice with ponzu or soy sauce or a little chilli sauce.

Cheese soup with beans and bacon

One of those deeply satisfying, silky soups, which I serve as a main dish.

Serves 4-6
onions 2, medium
butter 30g
smoked pancetta or bacon in one piece 200g
carrots 2, medium
celery 1 stick
thyme 4 sprigs
bay leaves 3
milk 400ml
plain flour 45g
chicken or vegetable stock 1 litre
grain mustard 2 tsp
butter beans 700g, bottled or tinned
cheddar 350g
chopped parsley a small handful

● *Directions*
Peel and roughly chop the onions. Melt the butter in a deep saucepan over a moderate heat, then cook the onions till soft. Dice the pancetta and add to the onion. Scrub and finely dice the carrots, finely dice the celery, then add to the softening onion and continue cooking for 10 minutes or so till tender. Add the thyme and bay leaves.

Warm the milk in a small saucepan and set aside. Stir the flour into the vegetables and continue cooking for 2 or 3 minutes, then add the milk and stir to a thick sauce.

Pour in the stock, bring to the boil then lower the heat and let the mixture simmer for a few minutes. Stir in the mustard, check the seasoning. (It may want pepper, but probably very little salt.) Now drain the beans and add them to the soup.

Grate the cheese and stir into the soup, leaving it to simmer (it is crucial it doesn't boil) for 5 minutes, until the soup has thickened. Add a handful of parsley as you bring it to the table and serve with bread.

A bowl of trifle to make for others and bring to the table is a glorious treat

Rhubarb and ginger trifle

A bowl to bring to the table as a glorious treat. Layers of sponge cake and fruit, custard and cream are nothing if not an indulgence, an occasional extravagance to make for others rather than yourself. Ginger and rhubarb are a very happy marriage, so I have not only added a trickle of syrup from

the ginger jar, but used the dried variety to add spice to the sponge.

You need 350g of sponge cake, so there will be some left over from the recipe below. It is not hard to use up with a little jam and cream, but I like to freeze a slab of the cake to have ready for another day.

I find the slow stirring of custard a rather restful way to spend half an hour in the kitchen, but I am aware it isn't everyone's idea of fun. The ready-made versions in the supermarket chilled section are really rather good – you will need 500ml.

Serves 8
For the ginger cake
butter 225g, softened
golden caster sugar 100g
light muscovado sugar 125g
orange grated zest of 1
self-raising flour 225g
ground ginger 2 tsp
mixed spice 1 tsp
eggs 4

For the rhubarb
rhubarb 750g, trimmed weight
blood oranges juice of 2
caster sugar 3 tbsp
water 200ml
preserved ginger 4 knobs, for decoration
syrup from the ginger jar 5 tbsp
double cream 400ml

For the custard
caster sugar 4 tbsp
eggs yolks 4
milk 400ml

● *Directions*

You will need a 22cm square cake tin, lined with baking parchment. Set the oven at 160C fan/gas mark 4.

Make the cake: put the butter into the bowl of a food mixer, add the sugars and cream together until soft and fluffy. Add the orange zest.

In a separate bowl, sieve together the flour and spices. Break the eggs into a small bowl and beat lightly to mix yolks and whites. Slowly add the egg to the butter and sugar. If it curdles slightly, simply add a spoonful of the spiced flour to bring it back. Lightly mix in the flour.

Transfer the mixture to the cake tin and lightly smooth the surface. Bake for 30 minutes in the hot oven until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out without raw cake mixture attached. Remove from the oven and leave the cake to settle for 10 minutes, then turn out on to a cooling rack.

Cut the rhubarb into short lengths, then place in a shallow casserole. Add the juice of 1 of the blood oranges and sprinkle over the caster sugar. Pour in 200ml of water, then bake at 160C fan/gas mark 4 for about 30 minutes till soft to the touch.

The rhubarb lengths are ready when you can slide the point of a knife through the stalks effortlessly. Set aside to cool.

Weigh 350g of the ginger sponge, keeping the remainder for later. Crumble roughly into the bottom of a large serving bowl. Remove the knobs of ginger from the jar and set aside. Pour 200ml of the rhubarb cooking liquor into a jug or bowl, add the syrup from the ginger jar and the remaining blood-orange juice, then pour over the ginger cake. (It is essential the sponge is thoroughly saturated with juice, so pour over more of the rhubarb juice, if needed.) Place half of the cooked rhubarb on top, then set aside to chill while you make the custard.

If you are making your own custard, beat together the sugar and egg yolks. Warm the milk in a saucepan and, just before the milk boils, pour it over the eggs and sugar, stirring constantly. Wash the pan then return the custard to the pan and place over a low to moderate heat. Stir almost constantly until it has thickened a little.

Remove from the heat, pour into a jug or bowl, leave to cool.

Pour the custard over the rhubarb and return to the fridge for an hour. It shouldn't set, but emerge soft and creamy.

Softly whip the cream, slice the reserved ginger, then spoon the cream over the surface of the trifle, decorating it with the coins of ginger and the remaining rhubarb. OFM

Instagram @NigelSlater

The OFM 30

Chefs and cooks! Restaurants and pop-ups! Cakes and bakes! Pubs and bars! Here, in no particular order, are our favourite things in the world of food right now

Rosheen Kaul, far left, and Joanna Hu, authors of the Chinese-ish cookbook

1

The Chinese-ish cookbook

Chinese-ish: Home Cooking, Not Quite Authentic, 100% Delicious is a joyous celebration of culture, cooking, family and friendship. During Melbourne's pandemic lockdown Rosheen Kaul, one of the city's hottest chefs, finally had time to write down her recipes and pass them to her friend, Joanna Hu, a self-taught illustrator. The result was *The Isol(Asian) Cookbook*.

"We threw the first book together in about a week and a half, and only foresaw printing maybe a dozen or so copies for our friends," says Hu. What was planned as a small 'zine turned into a series, and eventually a book deal. While the *Isol(Asian)* series had a goal to teach the fundamentals of Chinese cooking, Kaul says *Chinese-ish* needed to provide context as well: "Or the nuance and deviations from the 'ish' part wouldn't make sense."

Hu was born in the Hunan province in China before moving to Australia as a child, and Kaul identifies as Australian-Singaporean-Chinese-Kashmiri-Peranakan-Filipino. The recipes and stories span their lives – from their mothers' favourites to a less traditional, Sichuan-inspired cheese fondue.

The Beijing hot chicken recipe is one Kaul often cooks for events, and a great example of how she fuses cooking styles. "It's got a very Xinjiang-style flavour profile of heady cumin and chilli spicing," says Kaul, but it was Beijing where she first ate fried chicken dusted with the spices. "I've taken the brining and preparation steps of Nashville hot chicken, but seasoned it with a very north-western Chinese spice mix, then slapped it into white bread with pickled chilli mayonnaise and cold lettuce to cool the burn."

Kaul says that she and Hu were never going to write a straight Chinese cookbook. "We haven't grown up in a cultural vacuum, and there are many more cultures that influence how we cook, eat, perceive and communicate our relationship with food," she says. "These recipes are 100% authentic to us." **HOLLY O'NEILL** »

NO MESSING BREKKIES & BUTTIES
CAFF.

Left, classic butties at Caff in Manchester

Right, Clement Ogbonnaya, owner of the Prince of Peckham pub. Photograph by Sophia Spring

2

Butties are back

It is a truism that in times of economic crisis people crave comfort food. That may explain the current surge in upmarket sandwich outlets, such as Leeds' Don't Feed The Dog or Things In Bread, Manchester's Super Happy or vegan aces Banh Vi. If the £16 croissant-bun "royale" at London's Fallow is a luxury, others are going back to basics. Manchester's Caff is a new-wave butty shop, serving office workers sub-£4 baps, but from a shipping container with many vegan options. It's all "very fresh, no faffing", says co-owner, Jason Bailey. Sons + Daughters opened a second site at London's Borough Market in September, but has reduced the size and price of its sandwiches. High-quality fillings are now served in £6.50 burger-sized buns. This winter, says co-owner James Ramsden, "we're going to think twice about every penny we spend". **TONY NAYLOR**

3

Chrystal's Scottish shortbread

A packet of shortbread brought home from a half-term holiday looked like standard tourist fare but turned out to be a superior biscuit: four ingredients; sandy in texture but crisp throughout, thanks to cornflour; sweet-fat-salt in perfect balance. Chrystal Mackinlay started her business as a home baker, and now has a small business, still using her family recipe. Find it in Edinburgh's venerable grocer, Valvona & Crolla. **HO**

4

Taste Ed

Picture the scene: a teacher brings fresh fruit and vegetables into a school classroom, and the children talk and write about what they see, smell, touch, even hear, as it is peeled and sliced open. They are not forced to taste but, invariably, after discussing and drawing the produce, they decide to try. This is Taste Ed: a countrywide "food literacy" initiative.

"Food literacy is knowing what a carrot is, and recognising it with all five senses," says Bee Wilson, the journalist and author who cofounded Taste Ed with headmaster Jason O'Rourke.

Wilson and O'Rourke were inspired by the European model of *sapere*, a sensory education method which "isn't theoretical, isn't 'five a day'; it is food in children's hands. They play with it and learn the joy of it," says Wilson. In the UK, Taste Ed takes the form of five lessons any teacher can deliver. "Lesson one is always sight, and lesson five is always taste, but no one has to try it, and no one has to like it. What we're trying to get past is the fear." It is surprisingly effective, as acknowledged by the BBC Food and Farming award they won this year for food innovation. "We get the feedback, and again and again children are trying blueberries, cabbages and lettuce, and wanting more." **CLARE FINNEY**

5

Clement Ogbonnaya, pub-owner, London

Historically, Clement Ogbonnaya considered pubs to be "very white, very British, very unwelcoming". Even during his student days as an avid clubber he says he "didn't have the balls" to walk into one.

When he did start drinking in central London, Ogbonnaya loved the historical architecture of pubs but never felt that he "could come back again and again". They still felt too overwhelmingly white for this Nigerian-born Londoner, who thought they were failing to reflect modern drinkers. "Twenty-first century British communities are so mixed," says Ogbonnaya. "Not just black and white, old, young, but disabilities, physical and mental, the LGBTQ communities. I had this crazy idea: I want a pub that's genuinely about the community it resides in."

The result was the Prince of Peckham, opening in 2017 just off Peckham High Street in south-east London. Over multiple rooms, it offers pub staples – live football, quiz nights, food (from White Men Can't Jerk) – and, at the same time, hosts Haitian konpa dance, Black history lectures and people-of-colour-orientated wine tastings. Ogbonnaya, who grew-up in the area, mixes ticketed and free events with grassroots outreach. "Yes, it's £4.90 for an Amstel. It's £6.30 for Neck Oil. We also give away spaces to local Ghanaian aunties, over-60s tango, knitting groups. I want everyone to feel involved, at least once a week."

The 41-year-old's second pub, Queen of the South in Tulse Hill, is due to open this month and will offer community grants of up to £500. Having appointed

> **‘I had this crazy idea: a pub that’s genuinely about the community it resides in’**

Eva Arnaiz, the former head of charities and communities at the Breakfast Club chain, as managing director of his new Village People Pub Group, Ogbonnaya wants his pubs to produce “quantifiable data” that demonstrates “how serious we are about investing in the community”. **TN**

6

The East Neuk of Fife

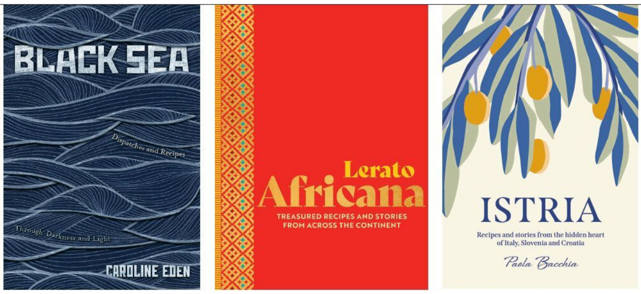
This stretch of villages has developed into one of Scotland’s culinary hotspots, with highlights ranging from the East Pier Smokehouse, fixing up fresh seafood at the water’s edge, to the Kinneuchar Inn, one of Scotland’s best new restaurants, plus independent businesses such as Æble, Scotland’s first cider bottle shop. The local Balcaskie estate is home to Bowhouse market, which hosts local producers including the excellent East Neuk Market Garden, the estate’s own in-house butchery, a micro-brewery and record shop called Futtle, and Scotland The Bread, which mills flour from ancient grains grown on fields just outside the front door. **BEN MERVIS**

7

Potato pavé

What is the potato’s perfect form? You may answer mash or roasties, but after a revelation at Niall Keating’s Lunar near Stoke-on-Trent, *OFM* knows it is pavé. “Like a big chip, isn’t it?” says Keating, somewhat underselling these many-layered batons that combine the chip’s crisp exterior with dauphinoise’s creamy density. Their creation is labour intensive: wafer-thin slices of starchy potato, multi-layered with butter, garlic, thyme, salt and pepper, then baked, cooled, compressed, portioned and pan-fried. You don’t see pavé on menus too often (shout-out to Leith’s Heron and Torquay’s the Elephant). It should be everywhere. **TN**

»


BLACK SEA
Dispatches and Recipes
Through Darkness and Light
CAROLINE EDEN
Lerato
Africana
TREASURED RECIPES AND STORIES FROM ACROSS THE CONTINENT
ISTRIA
Recipes and stories from the hidden heart of Italy, Slovenia and Croatia
Paola Bacchia

Left, cookbooks Black Sea, Africana and Istria

8

The Food Museum, East Anglia

Last year, Stowmarket's Museum of East Anglian Life changed tack, becoming the UK's first national food museum. When the change was mooted, staff realised just how many exhibits already fitted the bill. "Being able to taste food on a visit is key," says director Jenny Cousins. "Nobody is doing what we are trying to do: grow, make, eat. We have so much land here that we can show the 'grow'." There's a demo kitchen and, next year, the museum will host Meat The Future, an Oxford Natural History Museum exhibition about the environmental impact of livestock farming. In 2024, it plans to focus on school dinners. "A living history museum needs exhibits that relate to visitors' lives," says Cousins. **NICOLA MILLER**

9

Sonder & Salt podcast

Listening to Malaika Malz and Harleigh Reid's podcast Sonder & Salt is like hearing your friends chat, and sometimes argue, about their favourite food. In one episode, Controversial Food Opinions, Malz and Reid fall out over bully beef, a Jamaican classic made with corned beef. Malz is a fan, Reid is not, dismissing it as "slave food". The ensuing exchange brings humour to a subject that has nothing to laugh about. "What do you think your corned beef is made from, the finest cuts?" she asks, as Malz hits back. "No. We already know that. And we've made peace with it because it tastes good." The duo wanted to create a podcast that didn't require its listeners to be "foodies". They've achieved just that. All anyone needs to enjoy Sonder & Salt is to enjoy eating and talking about food. **MELISSA THOMPSON**

10

Trans-national and trans-regional cookbooks

We're seeing more cookbooks with a broader geographical approach. *Istria* by Paola Bacchia focuses on the Adriatic peninsula that is part of Croatia, Slovenia and Italy. The region's history has left its mark in Venetian stews, Viennese-style pastries, and flame-grilled skewers from the Balkans. "*Istria*'s story is my family's story," says Bacchia, whose grandfather was born in a part of the region that was then Austrian, lived there when it was Italian, and left when it became part of Yugoslavia. "The town of his birth is now in Croatia," she says.

Lerato Umah-Shaylor's cookbook, *Africana*, subverts a too frequent narrative of Africa as a monolith by identifying where regions converge and diverge, and link between the continent and the rest of the world. "While African identity contains many diverse identities, there are also commonalities, values that bind us," she says. As Caroline Eden began researching *Black Sea*, she saw how a trans-regional lens would help her understand the food in individual places. Trading history helped her understand a "shared fondness for certain flavours – herbs, molasses, fermented dairy, honey, small fish – that reflect its watery borders". **NM**

Visitors with livestock at the Food Museum in East Anglia

11

Original Tasty Jerk, south London

Located on an otherwise nondescript suburban road near Selhurst Park stadium in south-east London, the near-constant queue at the Original Tasty Jerk takeaway tells you all you need to know. Its pork is a must: tender belly slices chopped fresh from the grill, layered with smoky char on the outside. Jerk mutton is also good, as is the chicken. Buy a little extra because you will not resist the temptation to sneak a bite on the way home. **MT**

12

Wine's blurred colours

The most interesting wines have been blurring lines between red, white and rosé. These include pale reds that winemakers think of as "infusions", deeply coloured rosés, and "macerated" whites made from grapes that have spent a long time fermenting with their skins and, in some cases, become orange. They are among the best and most versatile food pairings, offering the freshness and acidity of whites and the texture of reds. Try super-light French reds Château Vieux Moulin I Love You, Corbières 2020 (£20.20, amathusdrinks.com) and Catherine & Pierre Breton Grolleau, IGP Loire 2021 (£19.95, buonvino.co.uk). Also: the superlative Greek Thymiopoulos Rosé de Xinomavro 2021 (£17, shrinetothevine.co.uk); and the lightly macerated Italian white/orange wine, Antonio Camillo Procanico Toscano Bianco (£19.50, buonvino.co.uk). **DAVID WILLIAMS**

13

Helen Evans, baker

"We sold more than 1,000 pastries and a half a ton of bread in almost three hours," says Helen Evans, a couple of days after her final shift as head baker at Flor, the much-missed south London bakery. "It was quite epic and very emotional."

Evans grew up in Northamptonshire, working as a chef in London and Paris, before turning to baking in 2014. She had a formative experience at Loafer Bread, an artisan operation in Melbourne, then spent two-and-a-half years in Lima at a bakery that milled its own wheat. She returned to London in 2019 to work in the tiny basement bakery at Flor restaurant in Borough Market.

During lockdown, increased demand for Evans's superlative bread, croissants and buns prompted a move to a larger space in Bermondsey. Part of what made Flor's baking so special, she says, was the obsessive focus on wheat. "We tried to source single varieties; we had first-hand relationships with the farmers," she says.

By the time Flor closed, Evans had found a place of her own in East Dulwich, which she hopes will be open by Easter. It will be called Eric's, after her father who is backing the venture. "It's a small space, and I won't be doing any wholesale," she says. "My biggest dream, alongside selling breads and pastries, is to have a small bakery school doing workshops in breads, viennoiserie, pasta and pizza – all of the wheat things." **KILLIAN FOX**

> **‘My dream is to have a small school doing workshops in wheat bakery’**

Baker Helen Evans in her new shop, Eric’s, in south-east London. Photograph by Phil Fisk

14

The School of Artisan Food refugee scholarship

“As a refugee, it doesn’t matter how long you live in this country, maybe you don’t have the same opportunities,” says Marco Munoz, who came to Britain from Ecuador in 1999.

Munoz was a trustee of Lewisham’s Refugee Cafe when a refugee scholarship at the School of Artisan Food (SAF) was offered to them. Money, language and family barriers were such that he could not find anyone capable of committing to the six months of full-time study in Nottinghamshire that was required. Instead, aged 62, Munoz took up the advanced artisan baking diploma himself. “It’s never too late to learn,” says the former teacher. After he finishes the course next month, he intends to train Lewisham refugees in the professional baking techniques and business skills taught at SAF.

The founder of SAF, Alison Swan Parente, says the charity loves students such as Munoz who can act as a “multiplier”, extending the reach of a scholarship that, since 2017, has trained seven students from as far afield as Eritrea and Croatia. Scholarship students (their fees and living expenses funded by two charitable trusts) work alongside regular students.

For Baneta Yelda, co-owner of Manchester’s Companio Bakery, SAF was life-changing. Then working part-time in clinical science, the refugee scholarship allowed her to pursue her passion for food and reacquaint herself with the “real food, community, locality” she loved in her native Iraq. With fellow SAF student Neil Large, Yelda now bakes for restaurants including the Michelin-starred Mana, but Companio’s focus is on feeding Ancoats’s residents with sourdough and viennoiserie. The pandemic turned Companio into a ”neighbourhood bakery, where we knew everyone’s name”, she says. **TN**

»

15

Natalia Middleton, Food Behind Bars

In 2021, a job was advertised on Instagram for a development chef role at Food Behind Bars (FBB), a charity working to improve food in prisons. “I sent them a message: ‘This is my dream job; I will get this job’,” says Natalia Middleton, now the charity’s head of food education. Her remit is vast: “I lead all our projects, write lesson plans, teach classes in prisons and after release, and work to help prison leavers gain employment. We want people in prison to eat healthy food made with care and thought, and to feel a sense of comfort. Food is the thing they look forward to daily, so if it brings them joy, we are on to a winner.”

Prisons serve three meals daily, spending an average of £2.29 per prisoner per day, according to Ministry of Justice figures published in *Inside Time* magazine. In the past, many prisons had working farms (there were 23 until numbers were drastically reduced in the early 2000s) with produce shared around the entire estate. Middleton tells me of wasted outdoor space: “That land could be for fruit and vegetables. That would be my dream.”

She also wants to see a development chef in every prison kitchen. Last September, FBB began a year-long project with HMP East Sutton Park, training female prisoners to become butchers in the prison’s in-house butchery using its own livestock. The cuts are sold in its farm shop. The women have even visited Smithfield market in London and been offered jobs. “They feel empowered; they are learning new skills,” she says. “It is really positive.” **NM**

16

Schofield’s Bar, Manchester

The creation of Bury-born bartending brothers Joe and Dan Schofield is the antithesis of the flashy modern cocktail bar, where gimmicks distract from average drinks. Inspired by the refinement of the Savoy’s American Bar, Schofield’s serves classic drinks – daiquiris, negronis, bellinis – that leave nowhere to hide. Every detail is correct, from the bloody mary spice mix to sharp, clear, extra-large ice cubes from specialist Black Ice. In 2022, Schofield’s became the first English bar outside London to make it on to the World’s 50 Best Bars long list, and this year the brothers will open their first restaurant, the Stock Market Grill. **TN**

Right, Natalia Middleton of prison charity Food Behind Bars. Photograph by Pål Hansen

CRISTIAN BARNETT. HAIR AND MAKEUP JULIANA SERGOT USING LANCÔME AND TIGI

17

Noilly Prat distillery, Marseillan, France

In a decade when it feels as though everyone with a man bun and a spice drawer has been creating their own vermouth, in a small port in south-west France they’ve been carrying on much as they have for the past 160 years.

Today, Noilly Prat makes four distinctive vermouths principally from local picpoul and clairette grapes. They are aged outside beneath the Mediterranean sun for a year in old whisky and cognac barrels, before being blended with mistelle and matured for a year in vats. Then the magic happens.

The vermouths are infused with up to 30 botanicals for three weeks. Original dry is the bartender’s go-to for a classic martini; extra dry was created specifically for the American market; rounded, spicy rouge is great with charcuterie, and cocoa beans in its aromatics make it good with chocolate, too. Ambré has been the village’s best-kept secret. Its botanicals include rosebuds, coriander and cardamom, and it’s very good with cheese. Once only available from the distillery, some online sources, such as thewhiskyexchange.com and goodwines4u.co.uk, occasionally sell ambré mail order.

Try a marseillanais, the local cocktail, a combination of two parts original dry to one part rouge, over ice with a twist of orange. Or take your inspiration from James Bond in *The Spy Who Loved Me*: “Noilly Prat and tonic, with a squeeze of lime if you have it.” **DEBORA ROBERTSON**

18

Bare Bones chocolate

Bare Bones is a micro-batch, bean-to-bar chocolate company and workshop based in a former railway arch in Glasgow’s city centre. Founded by Cameron Dixon and his partner, Lara Messer, in 2018, it began as a DIY operation in the couple’s kitchen, using a home oven and a chapati flour grinder, growing slowly through

Below, the L'Enclume team 'foraging' for One Dish by Cristian Barnett

their combined skill set. Dixon is a mechanical engineer who built or modified much of the company's machines. Messer is a food photographer who designed the brand's minimalist identity and selected its recyclable packaging.

The beans for all five of their single-origin bars come from cooperative farms, and quality is crucial. "[Chocolate making] starts with the farmer, and our job is to interfere as little as possible, and to keep the natural flavours – we just liven them up," says Messer.

The chocolates vary – from a rich and fruity 70% to a 59% dark milk chocolate made with lightly roasted coffee. "We want all the bars to be very different, so [someone can] really taste the difference between two origins," says Dixon. In addition to its regular range, Bare Bones has created several collaborative products, including a pear and cacao nib jam with local provisions company Juno, and a sweet, chocolatey syrup made from cacao husks, ideal for everything from breakfast porridge to roast vegetables. **BM**

19

One Dish book and exhibition

Many restaurants boast about being rooted in their environment but few embrace their surroundings as fully as Simon Rogan's L'Enclume in Cartmel, Cumbria, which harvests fruit, vegetables, herbs and flowers from its own farm just a mile away. To celebrate this connection, as well as L'Enclume's 20th birthday last year, photographer Cristian Barnett produced a book, *One Dish*, which takes these ideas to joyously absurd extremes.

In Barnett's images, which he's planning to exhibit in London this spring, chefs prep ingredients in muddy riverbanks and forage on precarious cliff sides. Sommeliers pour each other wine in a marshy pond, while a waiter lays a table on a hillside flush with wild garlic. The book builds towards the plating of a signature dish – roasted gem lettuce with hen of the woods, fermented mushroom juice and elderflower vinegar – but it's as much about the L'Enclume team participating in Barnett's wild ideas. "A lot of them were probably thinking, 'what on earth are we doing?'" he says. "But everyone seemed to enjoy it."

Most of all, it's a hymn to the countryside that supplies L'Enclume (the restaurant won its third Michelin star last year). "The landscape wasn't simply a backdrop," says Barnett. "Quite a few places where we photographed, the chefs actually do forage. They're not just paying lip service to that." **KF**

»

20

Mushrooming interest in gourmet indoor fungi

When Brett Graham reopened his Notting Hill restaurant, the Ledbury, last year he could have installed meat-ageing fridges or a lobster tank as a showpiece. Instead, the chef opted for cultivating mushrooms in a disused linen cupboard. Powered by an electric fan and around two litres of water a day, this "experiment" has enabled the restaurant to serve a regular meat-free mushroom course and, when time allows, invite diners to choose their own: shiitake poached in clarified butter with sherry vinegar and herbs, or grilled oyster mushrooms with koji oil.

Indoor cultivation can be challenging. Hot weather is a killer. But Graham, who sources inoculated growing blocks of compressed bran from the Bristol Fungarium, is enjoying bumper crops of multiple varieties, such as rare lion's mane. Rather than getting tired and spongy in transit, his just-harvested shiitake "have a beautiful fresh texture".

The simplicity of this sustainable, low-tech process means plenty of other restaurants are growing their own mushrooms. London's Fallow and the hotel chain The Pig grow using spent coffee grounds. In Greater Manchester, Polyspore and Stockport Fungi supply indoor-cultivated mushrooms to the region's best chefs.

Underneath the restaurant Where The Light Gets In, Alex Williams, the founder of Stockport Fungi, built growing racks with recycled materials, and uses waste grains and sawdust as mediums. Demand is soaring for varieties such as her tarragon oysters. Rare in the wild, they "smell and taste of tarragon. It's so weird and delicious."

In season, WTLGI still uses wild mushrooms but they are an unpredictable crop that must be carefully handled. By contrast, Stockport Fungi's mushrooms are "clean, fresh, incredibly reliable", says chef-owner Sam Buckley. TN

Left, mushrooms growing in a cupboard at the Ledbury, London

JUSTIN DE SOUZA, GARY CALTON

21

Doreen's Jamaican homemade rum cake

Rum cake is a traditional Caribbean cake, sometimes called black cake. Jackie Christian calls it an edible artefact of the sugar trade and Jamaican history, and of her own family. With her sister, Natalie Walker, she started making Jamaican rum cake using a recipe from her mother, Doreen. "If you make rum cake for someone," says Christian, "you've got to have love for that person – it is not a cheap cake." Dried fruit is soaked in Wray & Nephew rum, wine and port before being blended; more rum goes in the cake as it's mixed, and it's anointed with more still when it comes out the oven. Doreen's Jamaican Homemade Rum Cake is a growing business but Christian still bakes the dense, sticky, rich cakes herself in east London. It's a labour of love with each one sealed with a photograph of Doreen. HO

22

Sheffield's bar and restaurant scene

Readers may have noticed how often Sheffield cropped up in last year's *OFM* Awards. This strong showing came as no surprise: there has been a steady increase in places to eat out in the city, despite the pandemic. Bench, The Orange Bird and Tonco took regional runners-up spots in the Best Restaurant category and all opened after 2020.

To that trio of excellence you can add V or V, a vegetarian and vegan restaurant offering inventive small plates such as barbecued radish with seaweed bagna cauda, and cumin broccoli with pickled plum sauce. Just up the road, Native is a sister restaurant to traditional fishmonger JH Mann, opened by chef Christian Szurko in 2021.

Both are in Kelham Island, a former industrial neighbourhood filled with bars, cafes and

OMELETTES
VEGETARIAN BREAKFAST
BURGERS
JACKET POTATOES
SALADS
SANDWICHES & ROLLS
PANINI
MAIN COURSES
HOT & COLD DRINKS

Right, Gurdeep Loyal, author of Mother Tongue. Photograph by Amit Lennon

Left, braised ox cheek, caesar salad, ox tongue, at Juke & Loe, Sheffield

restaurants. Acclaimed bistro Juke & Loe has moved to new premises here and the owners of popular Sardinian restaurant Domo have opened a rooftop cocktail bar, Kelu, in the same building as the acclaimed Jöro – home to chef Luke French's experimental tasting menus. **HOLLY WILLIAMS**

23

Mother Tongue by Gurdeep Loyal

"I'm not just looking at Punjabi food, or at British food, I'm looking at the whole of me," says Gurdeep Loyal, author of *Mother Tongue*, his outstanding debut cookbook published next month. Loyal is the Leicester-born child of Punjabi parents and the book pays homage to the "lineage of mothers" who immersed him in their culinary heritage and taught him how to cook. But there's more to his story than his origins: Loyal was marketing manager for Harrods' food halls and head of food trends at Marks & Spencer. Travelling the world for work broadened his cooking repertoire. "The more you taste, the more adventurous you'll be in the kitchen," he says.

At first glance, *Mother Tongue* is a Punjabi cookbook with an exuberant British twist. Here is a cheese toastie with stilton and tamarind; there is a passionfruit and raspberry-rose victoria sponge. Look closer and you'll see other culinary influences spilling out: Mexican and Turkish in the keema nachos with tangy tomato ezme; Italian and Middle Eastern in the salted cardamom peaches with burrata and saffron; south-east Asian in the roast chicken with lemongrass. "The whole Thai principle of balancing sweet and savoury with umami and salt is something I do a lot," he says.

He takes ideas of cultural ownership seriously but dislikes "the thought of people feeling like they can't approach a culinary culture because they're worried about appropriating something". The key, he says, is "thinking about what your intention is, having a genuine interest in the culture you're taking food from, and being respectful. But I absolutely want people to play with their pantries." **KF**

24

Julie Lin, Gaga and Julie's Kopitiam, Glasgow

Staff shortages have been a dominant theme in hospitality. Yet in Glasgow, award-winning Scottish-Malaysian chef Julie Lin has been telling a different story. Lin has been inundated with job applications since launching her second restaurant, Gaga, in Partick in December 2021. This came after her tiny first restaurant, Julie's Kopitiam, won rave reviews. "We get applications through constantly," she says.

It's hardly typical for someone with no formal training running a kitchen the size of a cupboard, but "hardly typical" is Lin's calling card. Her food is half Malay, half Scottish, bold flavours inspired by her mum's home cooking combined with the fry-ups, stews and chips she grew up with in Glasgow. "Our prawn toast with kewpie mayo is a nod to Chinese takeaways. Our Taiwanese beef curry reflects my Scottish heritage, too."

Her approach to recruitment and training is also unconventional. "I think we have more, and more diverse, job applications because we're more open to those who don't have experience," she says. Instead, Lin looks for instinctive knowledge. Everyone she recruits is taught the same way her mum and her previous employers, all women, taught her: through watching and tasting rather than written rules. It's a method Malaysians call *agak agak*, which eschews timings and precise measurements in favour of intuition and practice. "My cousin describes it as seasoning the dish until you hear the ghost of your ancestors whispering in your ear to stop." **CF**

»

‘Knifemaking is so male dominated. Women need help to get into it’

25

Holly Loftus and Loftus Knives

“There are no easy routes into professional knifemaking in the UK,” says Holly Loftus, who set up her own studio in south-east London after a decade of dead ends, diversions and graft. A meeting with a hobbyist knifemaker in the US in 2010 sparked her interest, and, following a one-day class, she quit her job in community work, helping pensioners and homeless people, to learn the craft. Unable to find a professional way into the trade, Loftus enrolled in a six-month City & Guilds course for farriers in Scotland, later landing a job at the prestigious knifemaker Blenheim Forge, where she worked for three years.

In 2020, Loftus won the Newby Trust craft excellence award, which gave her studio space with subsidised rent at Cockpit Studios in Deptford. Now she makes beautiful Japanese-style chef’s knives with handles from storm-damaged London trees. Producing about 12 knives a month, they sell out within minutes via her website (prices range from £220 to £460). Many of her customers are women. “Knifemaking, and metalwork in general, is so male dominated,” she says. “I really feel that women need more help getting into these fields.” KF

Holly Loftus at her knifemaking studio, south-east London. Photograph by Phil Fisk

26

Goya Journal

Six years old, this online publication puts Indian home cooks in the spotlight. “We are focused exclusively on food and culture in India and south Asia. When we started, we were just two food writers who believed that real Indian food is found in the home, not in restaurants,”

Left, a selection of images from the Gourmand's Egg book, published by Taschen

say cofounders Aysha Tanya and Anisha Rachel Oommen. “We wanted a space to document the depth of that repertoire.”

Recent posts include a recipe for labangalatika, an elegant Bengali sweet encased in shortcrust, stuffed with milk solids, and foods that “mark the Mangalore-Catholic circle of life”, which are a blend of Goan, Portuguese and Mangalorean. “India has cuisines within cuisines and, as the landscape changes every hundred kilometres, so does the language, food and surrounding ritual,” say Tanya and Oommen. NM

27

The menus of Meanwood

“I've lived in Meanwood my whole life,” says 22-year-old chef Cameron Sohel. “It's crazy how much it's changed from 10 years ago.” Leeds has always had suburban food hubs. “Before Meanwood it was Chapel Allerton,” explains Sohel. Now Meanwood is the city's up-and-coming neighbourhood enjoying a post-pandemic boom in local socialising.

The Leeds restaurateur, Dave Olejnik, who runs Sarto in the city centre, has been venturing out to Meanwood for years. He credits Italian restaurant Zucco and craft beer bar Alfred as “catalysts” of the “urban village” that has emerged where Stonegate Road meets Monk Bridge Road. That junction is a “self-contained ecosystem”, says Olejnik, a location newly energised by Sohel and his fellow Dijon Boys taking over the kitchen at the cocktail bar Number 8. Then there's the opening of the Meanwood Tavern, home of Well Oiled's Detroit-style pizza, and Braizin Squad's Sunday residency at the Boot & Rally bar.

According to Simon Fogal, founder of the Leeds Indie Food festival, Braizin Squad “can lay claim to one of Leeds's best Sunday roasts”. Elsewhere in Meanwood, Fogal rates Culto pizza and the £150-a-head sushi bar Hanamatsuri, where chef-owner Kaoru Nakamura serves a handful of counter-dining guests an omakase menu.

There are opportunities locally, says Sohel – Dijon Boys have run pop-ups at Alfred, Boot & Rally and Meanwood Brewery's Terminus Tap, plus “a sense of community – that's definitely a reason Meanwood is thriving”. TN

28

Nathaniel Mortley

As a teenager, Nathaniel Mortley was often in trouble, and was stabbed when he was 16. His mum threatened to send him to live with his uncle in the Caribbean to keep him away from crime. Instead, he found work in high-end kitchens and initially “loved it”. Progressing through various fine-dining restaurants, he noticed he was often the only Black chef. “There would be cheeky comments,” he says, “and I lost my love for cooking.”

He went off the rails again and, in 2016, he was arrested on drugs charges, for which he was jailed in 2019. On his release, determined to turn his life around, he set about celebrating West Indian food, building a following on social media with dishes such as his take on curry mutton featuring mutton belly stuffed with curry farce, cassava paola and callaloo emulsion.

A supper club he launched last summer sold out, as has every event since then. “I refine food,” he explains. “Not that the original isn't good because West Indian is my favourite food. But fine dining is always French or modern British food. I never saw West Indian food celebrated like that. There was a space for fine-dining food with Caribbean ingredients.” Mortley's food is inspired, demonstrating that fine dining doesn't have to come with hushed tones and straight faces. MT

29

The Gourmand's Egg book

In her foreword to the gorgeous new hardback from magazine *The Gourmand*, published by Taschen, the American food writer Ruth Reichl celebrates the “alchemy” of eggs, the magic that enables their transformation into dishes as varied as zabaglione, omelette and soufflé. As this lavishly ovophilic work demonstrates, eggs are loaded with symbolic and metaphoric potential, and their hold on the artistic imagination, as well as our appetites, can be traced back through millennia. Beautiful photos and witty ruminations abound, though hungry readers will head for the recipes at the back. KF

30

Joseph Otway, chef

For 18 months, Joseph Otway has been creating arguably the most exciting food in Manchester using only a toaster, a sandwich grill, one induction hob and an electric pressure-cooker. Cooking in the basic kitchen at natural wine bar Flawd forced Otway to streamline his “rustic” use of seasonal, heritage ingredients in deft plates of whipped split-pea dip or yellow beans, goat's curd, garlic dressing and breadcrumbs. “If you don't want to compromise, you get creative,” says the 33-year-old.

Flawd spin-off restaurant Higher Ground has just opened and Otway is marvelling at the possibilities: “Suddenly I'll have whole pigs and a charcoal oven.” But his menu will continue to hinge on ingredients from Cinderwood Market Garden. He cofounded Cinderwood in 2020, to supply his and other Manchester restaurants with high-end organic produce. Wary of getting “preachy” about regenerative farming, he prefers to cook “fun, approachable” food, surprising diners with, for example, a terrific turnip caesar salad. “Selling turnips without the caesar is difficult,” he says. “It's not a sexy vegetable.” TN

HAIR AND MAKEUP JULIANA SERGOT USING LANCÔME AND TIGI

Portrait
Pål Hansen

Left, Su Scott. Right, black bean sauce noodles

The feel-good flavours of home

*When **Su Scott** began making her mum's Korean's dishes for her daughter, it led to an OFM Award. Now the recipes are at the heart of her new cookbook*

Eagle-eyed readers might recognise Su Scott's name. In 2019, she won best reader's recipe at our annual awards with her take on kimchi jjigae, a feel-good stew. The award was a turning point for Scott who wrote a food blog and now lives in London but, back then, didn't cook that much Korean food.

"Making my mum's kimchi stew, which my father liked, I remember thinking, 'I can be proud of this. This is what makes me Korean, and I need to find out more,'" says Scott, whose debut cookbook, *Rice Table*, is published in March.

Kimchi jjigae was part of a more complex story. In 2019, Scott was struggling with loneliness. She had moved to London in 2000 but had come to feel she was a foreigner both in the UK and in Korea.

After her daughter, Kiki, was born in 2015, Scott experienced postnatal depression: "When you're in that fragile mindset, a lot of questions start to arise. I found cooking as a way of controlling my collapsing world."

Dishes from childhood are at the heart of *Rice Table*. Scott wanted to preserve them for Kiki when she was older. "Being a mum and raising a dual-heritage child, I got scared of memories fading. If I don't remember something, no one's going to."

Interview
Tim Lewis

Food photographs
Toby Scott

Black bean sauce noodles

Jjajangmyeon

Jjajangmyeon is a popular Korean-Chinese dish which has established itself as one of the most convenient delivery meals of all time in Korea.

Sweet vegetables are essential for it to work its magic; to balance the richness of the pork and salty *chunjang* – a Korean style of black bean paste made from fermented soybeans, which can be found in Asian grocers or online. In its raw state, chunjang tastes slightly bitter and sour, so fry off the paste in oil before cooking to bring out a more rounded flavour.

Serves 2 generously

vegetable oil 4 tbsp
chunjang (Korean black bean paste) 4 tbsp
spring onions 2, white parts only, thinly sliced
garlic 2 cloves, finely minced
ginger root ½ tsp, grated
pork shoulder or belly 150g, diced
sea salt flakes
onions 2 small, diced
white cabbage 150g, diced
courgettes 70g, diced
golden granulated sugar 1 tbsp
soy sauce 1 tbsp
oyster sauce 2 tsp
warm chicken stock or water 250ml
water 1 tbsp
potato flour 1 tsp
wheat noodles 2 servings

For the toppings

cucumber 60g, cut into julienne strips
soft-boiled egg 1, halved
fine chilli flakes pinch (optional)

● *Directions*

Place the vegetable oil and chunjang in a cold wok or sauté pan over a low heat to slowly warm them up together. Stir constantly and fry the paste for about 3 minutes, until bubbles surface on top. You will notice the funky and salty smell of the paste. Once done, separate the fried paste and oil – you should have about 2½ tablespoons of oil. Set both aside. The oil will be used to cook the onions.

Wipe down the pan and heat the reserved oil. Stir in the sliced spring onion whites and cook for 1-2 minutes over a medium heat until they sizzle and smell fragrant. Add the garlic, ginger, pork and a good pinch of salt, and stir-fry for about 3 minutes to brown the pork, while energetically moving the pan to stop the alliums from burning.

Once the pork has browned, crank up the heat and add the onions. Stir-fry the onions over a high heat for a couple of minutes to soften and caramelise. The onions should still have a little bite to them and not be completely mushy.

Add the cabbage and courgette to the pan and continue cooking for a further 3 minutes, or until the vegetables are softened.

Stir in the sugar, then carefully pour the soy sauce around the edge of the wok to season the onions. Add the reserved, fried chunjang and the oyster sauce. Continue tossing and stirring vigorously to loosen and mix the paste in with the onions. After a couple of minutes, the onions should be well coated. Add the stock or water. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, combine the tablespoon of water with the potato flour to make a slurry. Maintain the gentle heat and gradually stir in the slurry to thicken the sauce slightly – I find about 2 teaspoons are enough for a ragu-like consistency. Cook for a minute or two to bring it all together. Check for seasoning and adjust it with a pinch more salt and sugar, if necessary.

Cook the noodles according to the packet instructions. Divide the noodles between two bowls and ladle the warm black bean sauce over the noodles. Top with julienned cucumber, the boiled egg and pinch of chilli flakes, if using. »

Grilled salt- and sugar-cured mackerel

Jaban godeungeo gui

Grill over the embers of coals if weather permits, otherwise slide under the grill until the skin chars and blisters. Serve with anise-pickled rhubarb (see right for recipe), or a squeeze of lemon.

Serves 2, or 4 as a starter
mackerel 2, heads removed, cleaned and butterflied, or 4 fillets
sea salt flakes 2 tsp
golden granulated sugar 2 tsp
sake 1 tbsp
vegetable oil 1 tbsp
lemon wedges to serve

● *Directions*

Pat the fish dry with kitchen paper and lay them on a tray in a single layer, skin-side down. Sprinkle evenly with half the salt and sugar, then turn over and sprinkle with the rest of the salt and sugar.

Refrigerate uncovered for at least 1 hour and up to overnight. Preheat the oven grill on high. Line a shallow baking tray with foil and place it in the oven to heat. When the fish is laid on the hot tray, it will start to cook immediately from top and bottom. Combine the sake and vegetable oil in a bowl. Remove the mackerel from the fridge and gently brush the sake and oil mixture on both sides.

Carefully remove the foil-lined tray from the oven, which should be hot. Place the mackerel skin-side up and grill on high for about 4 minutes until the skin chars and blisters in places. There is no need to flip to cook the flesh side – it should be perfectly cooked.

To serve, transfer to individual plates with wedges of lemon on the side.

Left, grilled salt- and sugar-cured mackerel with anise-pickled rhubarb. Right, curried pot rice

Anise-pickled rhubarb

Rhubarb cho jeorim

The tart rhubarb laced with sweet orange and star anise has an almost floral sweetness.

Makes enough to fill a 700ml sterilised heatproof container
rhubarb 400g
water 200ml
white granulated sugar 100g
sea salt flakes 1 tsp
fresh orange peel 2 strips
star anise 2
cider vinegar 100ml

● *Directions*

To prepare the rhubarb, cut the stalks into 5cm-long batons, then halve each one lengthways to cut it into thin strips. Transfer the stripped rhubarb into a sterilised, heatproof jar or container.

Put the water, sugar and salt into a small saucepan. Whisk together to combine and add the orange peel and star anise. Bring to a gentle simmer over a low heat until the sugar has fully dissolved – this takes about 4 minutes.

Once hot, stir in the vinegar, then warm the liquid up for a minute so the brine is hot but not boiling.

Remove from the heat and pour over the rhubarb, pressing down gently to submerge in the brine. Put on the lid, leaving it ajar so everything cools down a little, before securing the top.

Let the pickle sit at room temperature, away from the direct sun, for one day, then transfer to the fridge. The pickles will be ready to eat after two days, and they will keep well in the fridge for two weeks.

Curried pot rice

Kare sotbap

This is an ode to the bright yellow Korean curry that my mother used to make with ready-made ottogi curry powder. Eat with kimchi.

Serves 4
white short-grain rice 300g
water or chicken stock 300ml
soy sauce 1 tbsp
coriander seeds 1 tbsp
cumin seeds 1 tsp
black peppercorns ½ tsp
fenugreek seeds ¼ tsp
Kashmiri chilli powder ½ tsp
ground turmeric 1 tsp
vegetable oil 2 tbsp
onion ½, thinly sliced
unsalted butter 20g
garlic 3 cloves, finely minced
tomatoes 200g, skinned and roughly chopped
golden granulated sugar 1 tsp
sea salt flakes 2 tsp
frozen peas 100g

To finish
snipped chives 2 tsp

● *Directions*

Place the uncooked rice in a mixing bowl and wash thoroughly (see note at end of recipe). Once the water starts to run clear, fill the bowl with cold water and soak the rice for 30 minutes, then drain using a fine sieve. Mix the water or stock with the soy sauce.

Meanwhile, place the coriander seeds, cumin seeds, black peppercorns and fenugreek seeds in a small saucepan and dry roast over a low heat for a minute or so. Swivel the pan around a little to keep the spices moving. It should smell very fragrant but not burnt. Once the whole spices are roasted, grind them to a fine powder using either a spice grinder or a mortar and pestle. Stir in the chilli powder and turmeric. Set aside.

Heat the vegetable oil in a heavy-based, lidded saucepan over a low heat. Add the onions, a good pinch of salt and sauté gently, stirring frequently, for about 10-15 minutes. The onions should be floppy and beautifully caramelised, with the edges catching a little colour. If you feel it is cooking too fast, add a tiny splash of water.

Once the onions are jammy, melt in the butter. Stir in the garlic and spice mix, and cook for a minute or two so the garlic and spices can soften into the caramelised onion. Add the tomatoes, sugar and salt, then cook for 5 minutes. Stir in the drained rice, and water and soy sauce. Put the lid on and simmer for 10 minutes over a low-medium heat.

Turn the heat down as low as it can go. Add the peas on top. Put the lid back on and cook for a further 8 minutes to steam. Turn off the heat and let it sit for 10 minutes with the lid firmly left on.

Once 10 minutes are up, open the lid and give it a gentle stir with a rice paddle or wooden spoon to mix it all up – notice the slightly crunchy crust at the bottom of the pan. Divide the rice between bowls and scatter with snipped chives. Serve while warm.

This is an ode to the bright yellow Korean curry that my mother used to make

Note on washing rice

I learned to scrub rice anti-clockwise three times and rinse it three times more.

For two servings, put 150g of short-grain white rice into a bowl of cold water and swish around quickly to separate the sitting dust or debris that will float to the surface. Drain off the water and repeat. After you have drained off the water for the second time, gently rub the grains to separate, then add water to rinse. Drain the starchy water carefully and repeat two more times. The water in which you rinse the rice will change from milky white to more translucent but not completely clear (more like the colour of coconut water) as you repeat the process. During the winter, washing rice can feel extremely cold and uncomfortable. One tip I've picked up along the way is to use a large balloon whisk instead – it also helps if you're not so sure how to rub the grains gently enough but also effectively. OFM

Rice Table: Korean Recipes and Stories to Feed the Soul by Su Scott (Quadrille, £27). To order a copy for £23.49 go to guardianbookshop.com

The last word

Rachel Cooke

Sometimes, making someone a cup of tea, a loaf of bread or even a meatloaf is all you need to say 'I love you'

Remember the saffron and garlic mousse with mussels? If you read this column last month, you'll know that in the final days of 2022, I went to Henry Harris's new restaurant, Bouchon Racine, hoping these never-to-be-forgotten wobbly pyramids, for which I'd often longed since he closed his old place eight years ago, might be on the menu. In fact, they weren't. But, as you'll also know, any sense of disappointment on my part was fleeting: a pin prick that lasted only as long as it took to order my (delicious) rabbit in mustard sauce.

I try not to abuse the very small amount of power that comes with writing a column like this, but when Harris emailed me after that one appeared, joking about how he'd better get practising, saffron mousse-wise, I was shameless. I wrote back, telling him the date on which I'd booked another table (bagging one, incidentally, isn't easy these days; his restaurant, above a pub in Clerkenwell, is now more popular than Harry Styles). No pressure, I said, but if your moulds and bain-maries happen to be handy … I mean, come on! As Nancy Friday and many other heroines of the 1970s taught us, sometimes a girl must ask for what she wants.

The weeks ticked by, and eventually the big night arrived – and yes, the mousse was chalked on the blackboard. Actually, this isn't quite true. It had sold out earlier, but four had been kept back for us (I was with three extremely greedy men, hand picked to make myself look less so). What was it like? Frankly, it was more amazing even than I remembered; I could have eaten two, no problem. But my point today hasn't really to do with this dish's way with butter and eggs, but rather with an ingredient that cannot be bought in any market, farmer's or otherwise: magnanimity. There was, it seemed to me, something so generous of spirit in the making of these mousses, a feeling that only grew whenever I saw Harris emerging from the kitchen to talk to people (his manner, I should say, is the polar opposite of that of the overbearing man-in-a-white-jacket desperately in search of praise). All restaurants hope to make money. Not all restaurants care fervently – or even very much at all – about making people truly happy.

A Sunday roast is a happier alternative to mushy verbal outpourings

I associate food strongly with care, and even with love. Like Catherine and her sister, Clare, in *Happy Valley* – "there's tea, still, in that pot" – I grew up in a family where to make someone their favourite meal was the preferred means of expressing embarrassing fond feelings. A cake or a Sunday roast were – and still are – happier alternatives to mushy verbal outpourings for all involved. My brother Ben and I are not, outwardly at least, excessively sentimental, but when I go to Sheffield to see my family, as I did the other week, he always gets up early to bake me a loaf to take back to London. For every day that it lasts, I think of him as I toast it – and if I'm feeling really mawkish, I might be moved to send him a WhatsApp (thumb emoji, bread emoji, a kiss, if he's lucky).

But perhaps, in the present moment, this kind of thing – the culinary embrace – feels more important to all of us. Everyone is feeling the pinch. Things are hard and uncertain. In a restaurant, should we be lucky enough to be in one, we want warmth and a tilt at perfection; at home, we want comfort, and to share our table with others if we possibly can. The cold, bare minimum won't do, unless absolutely unavoidable. I'm in a meatloaf phase right now and, in the spirit of this column, here's how I make it. In a bowl, put 500g of minced beef, some fried onion, garlic and pancetta (or bacon), a sprinkle of dried herbs and lemon zest, a tablespoon each of parmesan and ricotta (or soft cheese), a beaten egg, and seasoning. Mix together, add to an oiled tin, and bake for about 50 minutes at 180C. It's not as good – or as good-looking – as a Henry Harris saffron mousse, but with roast potatoes, green beans and gravy it is, I guarantee, kindness on a plate. **OFM**

@MsRachelCooke

ALAMY, GETTY IMAGES

Next month

In next month's Observer Food Monthly

Step into spring with an Easter menu from Sally Clarke, baking recipes from Claire Ptak and a very special chocolate-egg taste test

Free with the Observer on 16 March

OFM King's Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9GU. T: 020 3353 2000, **food.monthly@observer.co.uk.** Follow us on Instagram and Twitter **@Obsfood**
Editor Allan Jenkins **Deputy editor** Gareth Grundy **Design director** Lynsey Irvine **Deputy design director** Paul Reed **Production editor** Campbell Stevenson **Deputy production editor** Lindsey McWhinnie **Picture editor** Michael Whitaker **Contributors** Helen Gooding, Alex McFadyen, Holly O'Neill **Advertising manager** Tracey Thomas **Colour Reproduction** GNM Imaging. Printed at Wanstead Bicester, Chaucer Business Park, Bicester, OX26 4QZ

You can't put
a price on taste.
But you can get
a 42% discount.
Last
chance

A new year calls for new flavours. That's why we've made our award-winning newspapers and magazines available for less than you might think. As well as Feast and Observer Food monthly, subscribers to our award-winning newspapers and magazines can now explore key moments from the worlds of culture, politics, sport and more.

Offer ends 19 February for up to 42% off the cover price (that's just £1.60 per issue).

Package	Newsstand price per month	Subscription rate	Limited time offer price per month for 12 months	Saving
Every day	~~£84.50~~	~~£60.99~~	**£48.79**	**42%**
Six day	~~£69.33~~	~~£53.99~~	**£43.19**	**37%**
Weekend	~~£30.33~~	~~£24.99~~	**£22.49**	**25%**
Saturday	~~£15.17~~	~~£13.99~~	**£12.59**	**16%**
Sunday	~~£15.17~~	~~£13.99~~	**£12.59**	**16%**

Prices above are monthly. Savings calculated are savings made per month against the retail price.

Scan the QR code to subscribe
or visit theguardian.com/paper-press

The Guardian | The Observer

Offer ends Sunday 19 February 2023. Open to UK mainland and NI residents aged 18+. The savings calculation is based upon the saving made per month against the retail price of all products included in the subscription package. The Guardian and Observer reserve the right to end this offer at any time. Details correct at the time of printing. For full subscription terms and conditions visit theguardian.com/subscription/terms.

Be more than a volunteer. Be a friend.

Sign up to become a Telephone Friend.

With more than 1.2 million older people in the UK often feeling lonely, Telephone Friends are more important than ever.

ageuk.org.uk/telephonefriend

Age UK includes the charity, its charitable and trading subsidiaries, and national charities (Age Cymru, Age Scotland and Age NI). Age UK is a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England (registered charity no. 1128267 and registered company no. 6825798). The registered address is 7th Floor, One America Square, 17 Crosswall, London EC3N 2LB. ID204976 01/23